

## **Nuclear Detonation**

A nuclear detonation involves an explosion with intense light and heat, a damaging pressure wave and widespread radioactive material that can contaminate the air, water and ground for miles around. Following the explosion, it is important to avoid radioactive material whenever possible. While experts predict that a nuclear attack is less likely than other types of attacks, terrorism by its nature is unpredictable.

### **If there is advanced warning of an attack**

Take cover immediately, as far below ground as possible. Any shield or shelter is better than none.

### **If there is no warning**

1. Shelter yourself from radioactive fallout by staying inside your home or office, unless instructed to do otherwise.
2. Stay inside. Close the windows. Turn off the heaters, air conditioners, or ventilation system. Stay toward the center of the house or building. If there is a basement, go there.
3. Tune a radio to your local emergency-broadcasting network and listen for instructions.
4. To limit the amount of radiation to which you are exposed, think about time, distance and shielding.
  - o **Time:** Minimizing time spent exposed will reduce your risk.
  - o **Distance:** The farther away you are away from the blast and the fallout, the lower your exposure.
  - o **Shielding:** If you have a thick shield between yourself and radioactive materials, more of the radiation will be absorbed, and you will be exposed to less.
5. Look for symptoms. If you believe you have been directly in the path of the fallout or in the blast zone itself, watch for symptoms of exposure like nausea, loss of appetite, reddening of the skin, or diarrhea. Seek immediate medical help if symptoms occur. A doctor can test for the blood changes that are the first detectable symptoms of exposure.
6. Watch what you eat. Avoid drinking fresh milk or eating fresh vegetables from the affected area.
7. Follow instructions. Your best chance of avoiding exposure is to do what the experts advise. If told to evacuate after the radioactive cloud has passed or gone in another direction, do so immediately. Even after the cloud has passed, radioactive materials may have been deposited on the ground.